1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.166-C]

According to Mbuti opinion the villager is deficient in the senses of sight, smell, hearing, and touch. There is little doubt that the Pygmy is extra-sensitive in these respects, but no scientific investigation has been conducted as yet to determine the exact extent. But if the environment favors a certain type of physical development, it also favors a certain type of emotional development. We must think of the forest not only as a place of abundance, offering a sufficiency of food and shelter, relatively free from danger, but also as a closed world, very unlike the open world of the plains dwellers. Not only has the Pygmy little incentive to develop beyond his diurnal economy, each day taking care of itself, but also he has little to make him think except in terms of the present.

182
[829]
[51]

Lt Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[NET HUNTERS]

[CP 218-B]

being confined to their beds for three days, as mentioned by Schebesta (1952), they were made to move about continually by the villager instructors. The boys' fathers, who were present at all times, frequently comforted their sons, apparently to the annoyance of the villagers. There was, however, no question of the savagery implied by Schebesta. During the following two months the boys were strictly disciplined. There was a process of physical training that was undeniably tough, but it fulfilled only one of the major purposes of the *nkumbi*, namely, to fit boys for adult life. The Mbuti fathers, however, obviously had different ideas as to how far this discipline should be carried and criticized the villagers when they carried it too far. Further, when there were no villagers in the camp, the Mbuti talked quite openly and showed by their speech and their behavior that they had no respect for the taboos associated with the festival. It seemed quite evident that they consciously underwent the *nkumbi*, not because of any religious significance, but because it gave them status in villager society, in which any uncircumcised youth is a laughing stock. The important thing, then, was the circumcision, for this specific purpose.

1: Turnbull E-4 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

Z 585 628 563 gifts, such as a few arrows. But it is also subject to settlement between the two villagers involved. This is formally accomplished by having a ceremony in the village according to village custom. [Both Putnam (MS) and Schebesta (1952, 238) mention the possibility of a double ceremony when it is a question of exchanging two brides rather than of effecting a "purchase."] Such ceremonies, belonging to the villager rather than the Mbuti, need not concern us here. It is worth noting, however, that, as with the village ceremony of *nkumbi* initiation, the Mbuti undergo the village marriage ceremony merely as a matter of convenience. They pay no attention to its magical or religious significance, or to the taboos that would fall upon any villagers undergoing the same ceremony (though they may pay lip service to them in the presence of their patron). Further, even during such a villager ceremony, the Mbuti have their own way of consecrating the union, both by introducing a dance with forest leaves, associated with the *elima* (the women's religious association), and by the singing of *elima* songs. In this way the young bride from the distant band is introduced to the association of her female companions-to-be.

P 177 585 P [829] P [533] [535]

P 609 571 585 It is unlikely that the bride will be a complete stranger to the band, but even if so, she will be immediately befriended and will have willing helpers to make her first few days of

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 223 - C]

the official wailing, as well as before or after it. 152

Anne Putnam (1954, 77) mentions the opinion of a Pygmy hunter concerning the village custom of burying the dead in a cemetery. He is reported as saying, "There the ground locks everyone's arms together and it isn't comfortable." 764 829

She also refers (1954, 81) to village speech-making following a burial, during which the cause of the death is hinted at. On one occasion, the death of a young Pygmy girl in the village, the villagers attributed the calamity to the evil-eye and roused a relative of the girl to vow vengeance. The next morning, however, the Pygmies all went hunting, despite the assurance of the villagers that it was dangerous to go hunting for three days after any death and that no game would fall into their nets. Four antelope were caught. 763 761 [754] 765 177 224

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

Magical Practice

P 177 789 It might be observed that the Pygmies have adopted a number of villager magical practices; certainly some individuals give the appearance of having done so. But we cannot accept this as significant, nor can we relate these practices to other practices in Pygmy society until we understand, for instance, the significance of the old Pygmy who blew his magic whistle vigorously at the sky to prevent rain and who, when it poured, simply shrugged his shoulders and retreated to the shelter of his hut. This incident P [829] may seem trivial, but there are many such incidents that indicate a lack of faith in the efficacy of such magical practices as the Pygmies attempt.

P 224 177 789 Also to be considered, and more important because it brings villager and Pygmy together more directly, is the reported resort to villager witch doctors to improve the hunting. Sche-

Z 789 177 563 [791] [P 250-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

To

Z 182 881 776 778 [825] [532] [535] the villager the masked dancers described in the account of the 1954 *nkumbi* (Turnbull, 1957, 193) represent the *ngosa* bird, indicating the presence of a benevolent spirit. Similarly, the bullroarer represents supernatural power. The various taboos applied to the *ganza* express village subordination to that power which is sufficiently strong to prevent the villagers from staying in the camp over night even though it meant allowing an already unruly *ganza* further scope for getting out of control. The *nkumbi* places the villager initiates in a definite relationship to the supernatural. It is closely connected with tribal lore and the ancestor cult.

Z [769]

P 177 881 776 778 829 The Pygmies have no tribal lore and no ancestor cult. To them the masked dancers were the villagers, André and Sabani, and the bullroarer was a piece of wood whirled around on the end of a length of twine. The "*ngosa* bird" and the "voice of the spirit," for the Mbuti, were neither "real" nor did they represent any reality. They were empty and rather ineffective theatrical devices, an opinion evidenced both by conversation among the ganza at night and in their constant burlesque.

[P. 254-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

796 796 798 782 575 [829] If this is magic, it is totally different from the kind of magic practiced by the villagers, for which the Mbuti reserve an attitude of skeptical amusement. Whatever it is, it shows a very different attitude to the forest from that of the villagers. My interpretation of the *molimo*, from the meetings I have attended and the conversations I have overheard, is that it is an association of hunters that has the power of making itself heard by the God of the Forest. This God is referred to by many different names, even within the same band, and, as frequently as not, is simply referred to as "The Forest," also, though less often, as "Father" and "Grandfather." The association must fulfill the conditions listed above in order to make itself heard; the *molimo* horn used in conjunction with song is the focal point of the meetings. [533] [534] [562] [858] Women and children are presumably excluded, because hunting, the most important of all activities to the Mbuti and regarded by him as such, is primarily the province of men, and the God of the Forest is also God of the Hunt.[1] The dominant note of the meetings is unanimity and insistence. All hunters must attend. They sit in a tight group around the fire as if by this

[1] It might be expected that, as the net hunt involves cooperation between both sexes, the women would have some part to play in the *molimo* among net hunters, at least.

[D 257-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

P 177 184 hunting bands. We seem to have, throughout, this clear opposition between the forest and the outer world, the Pygmies and the villagers, the human and the non-human worlds. As far as we can see, both the archer communities and the net hunters maintain their separateness, however close their symbiosis with the villagers may appear to be. They maintain not only a physical distance between themselves and their villager neighbors, but also a spiritual one, emphasizing their own indigenous system of values in opposition to that of the villagers. It remains for further field work to tell us whether the system of values held by each group is the same, common to all Mbuti, or not. Despite the P [575] [114] difference between Schebesta's account of the archer *toré* association and my own account of the *molimo*, a re-interpretation of the material published by Schebesta could easily suggest that there is a remarkable degree of unity here. But as presented, the facts could be interpreted in any number of ways.

P • 829 648 186 Z 563 The Mbuti is always conscious of his relationship with the villager and of the subordinate position he is forced to accept. It is a major consideration, it seems, that must be taken into account in every aspect of his life when he is in the village (here I refer mainly to the net

[P 274-B]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[P. 274-C]

hunters). Even in situations that do not directly associate the two groups, the Mbuti thinks in terms of his ethnic status. Thus, when the villagers were taxed by the administration and exemption was granted to all Mbuti, the point at issue among the Pygmy hunters when they discussed the matter was whether or not such exemption was a slight on the Mbuti, placing them somehow on a lower level than the tax-paying villagers. At least one Mbuti felt so strongly that he secured the necessary money and insisted on paying. The majority, however, compromised by saying that they were different people, so why should the same law be expected to apply to all?

The villager himself opposes the two worlds just as does the Pygmy. While he always tries to include the Pygmy in social, economic, and political fields, there is a rejection at the magico-religious level. In the *nkumbi*, the villagers seemed to be both aware of and unconcerned with the formal rejection by the Mbuti of villager values associated with initiation; the villagers failed to introduce their *molimo* into the ceremony, presumably because there were no villager boys present.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

tween villagers arising out of the migratory tendencies of "their" Mbuti.

The effective system is that each band maintains an exchange relationship with the village or villages closest to its hunting territory, and effectively the relationship is an exchange not between band and village, except as territorial units only, but between nuclear families or mere individuals. If the exchange relationship follows descent lines, it is no more than incidental. From the Mbuti point of view, in any case, it makes not the slightest difference. All villagers are animals to be "eaten" without discrimination. It only makes a difference from the villager point of view, the question of compensation of the rightful "owner" continually arising.

Leaving the theoretical system for the moment, and looking at the effective system of exchange, we find that the tendency to think of the relationship as hereditary, on the part of the villagers, is irrepressible. As far as the Mbuti are concerned, they pick and choose. As a child an Mbuti may grow accustomed to a number of "owners," as his parents move from band to band, or village to village. When he is old enough to hunt he will choose whichever "owner" happens to be convenient at the time, but if he does not get the treatment he expects, he will without hesitation get himself "adopted" by another villager, even in the same village. The only consideration countenanced by the Mbuti is their own convenience.

A wise villager will treat his Mbuti well, and in return will be able to get the minimum service from them without too much difficulty, and there are instances where such relationship has apparently persisted over several generations (see Table 1). But the contemporary situation militates against persistence. For instance, among the Epulu net-hunters one of the larger "clan" units that made up the total composition of the band was the Puemi clan. In its entirety it was claimed by a prominent Bira named Ngoma. But Ngoma had to spend most of his time in Mambasa, the administrative post some fifty miles from his village, so in his absence his Mbuti were divided, according to the Bira system of inheritance, between his two brothers, Isa and Takalili. But the system did not specify where the dividing line should be drawn, and in any case the Puemi had moved a number of miles in the opposite direction and were on the other side of the Epulu River, in the territory of Chief Kachui of the Ndaka tribe. There they formed allegiances to local villagers, ignored the demands of Isa and Takalili to return to hunt for them, saying that they were

2: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

It is also possible to see Mbuti scrounging food from villagers

other than their own *kpara* and, when not successful, simply stealing what they want. If they are caught they are scolded by their *kpara* and that is generally all. If more fuss is made than that, all the Mbuti are likely to pack up and return to the forest within hours. But whatever Mbuti may be seen engaged in whatever activity, they can be seen only as individuals in relationship to a particular villager at that particular moment, unrelated to other villagers and other Mbuti, unless they are included in the same activity. Only in the village camp of the Mbuti, usually at the edge of the plantation, do they form a society, but the interpersonal relationships observable even in a village camp bear little resemblance to relationships in the more strictly village context.

The situation becomes more understandable in light of the expressed Mbuti attitude to their own place in the village world. They refer to the village as being a place for good hunting and good eating. Hunting requires cunning, and particularly when dealing with a "tricky" animal such as the villager, say the Mbuti. The word for "trickery" means more than "clever," it has connotations of supernatural power. So the Mbuti, when hunting in the village, use appropriate tactics, just as they do in the forest. Carrying wood and fetching water, building houses and pounding manioc, are all part of those tactics, and may perhaps be likened to the net with which the Mbuti trap the forest animals.

This Mbuti attitude to the relationship not only fits with the theory that there is, in effect, no necessary economic interdependence, but it also fits well with the suggestion of *apparent* structural incompatibility. Mbuti talk of "eating" the villagers, and indeed the villagers also talk, with some asperity, of being eaten. In Mbuti thought, however, it is rather more literal than it may seem, for the villagers are not only referred to as animals, a common term of abuse, but they are considered as animals. And when one eats an animal one merely consumes its substance, one does not thereby assume its form or its pattern of behavior.

Even supposing that there was a necessary economic interdependence, the daily life of the village in no way reveals any sense of economic urgency. Even in times of crisis, such as the cotton harvest, powerful chiefs like Kachui may evidently find themselves deserted by the Mbuti and forced to make out on their own. But if there were a true economic dependence, then there would have to be a workable economic system, with an associated system of social control; and

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

same age group, and on maturity and marriage the old nuclear family sometimes reaffirms itself as an extended family. The old parents may build a separate hut adjoining the huts of their married children, or even live in the hut of one of their offspring, who will probably build an extension for the purpose. But during adolescence children may well be separated from their biological parents by both time and space. Similarly in adulthood there is not infrequently friction between brothers, sometimes leading to fission within the band.

Finally, in connection with the importance of age as a structural principle, it should be pointed out that the lack of a unilineal system of descent among the Mbuti is associated with a lack of any developed form of ancestor worship. Practices associated with death will be dealt with more fully later; here it need only be said that far from remembering the dead by word or action, the main objective seems to be to forget them. They may never be referred to again, particularly by name, and there is no memorial maintained in their honor, no marked or tended grave site. However, they are by the same token not feared, and insofar as they are remembered at all they are remembered with affection. The concern of the Mbuti is almost exclusively with the present. This is not to say that they deny a past or a future, either in this life or the next; it is merely to say that they believe that by a correct fulfillment of the present, the past and the future will take care of themselves. This correlates with the age-group system and with the dominance and prestige of the two middle groups, the youths and the hunters, for in their hands lies the fulfillment of the present.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.181]

CHAPTER 11

Government: Internal

INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Before attempting to understand the over-all system of government in Mbuti society, it is necessary to distinguish between different fields of authority, for each field of activity has its own leaders, drawn from a particular segment of the community. It is in this way that authority is dispersed throughout the band; every adult is accorded special respect in one field or another, but none can claim respect in all fields. Individual authority is unthinkable, and not only are there no chiefs or headmen in Mbuti society; there are not even any councils of elders or any ritual specialists such as prophets or diviners. Such adults as have respect in any particular field at any particular moment do not even have any authority; they can merely claim to be heard. Their decision is likely to be given general assent and, as in economic matters, that decision is then said to be "good," and "pleasing" to the forest. The forest personified as a benevolent divinity remains as the only recognized authority, one which sometimes expresses its feelings with unmistakable clarity; an excessive storm, falling trees, poor hunting and ill health may all be taken as signs of displeasure, while good weather and good health and good hunting are indications that all is well. But often the forest remains silent. Then the Mbuti have to sound its feelings out through discussion. Dreams may be taken into account, but there is no question of waiting for visible signs of the forest's pleasure. The delegation of authority is clear; the decision of the whole band, the very fact of unanimity, is sufficient sign of the favor of the forest. There is always diversity of opinion, freely expressed, but prolonged disagreement is considered as "noise," and offensive to the forest. Unanimity, therefore, is a powerful and positive value, equated with the opposite to noise—quiet, or *ekimi*.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

their honey trees, "you in this direction, you in that." But Moké did an unusual thing. He said it was all right for the camp to split, but it would displease the forest if it split badly, and it *was* splitting badly (*"apa ndaso aké sinana"*). Tungana had gone to the village; Masisi, siding with Tungana but not wanting to join him, was planning to go east, Ekianga to the north; Cephu was going to leave the territory altogether; and Manyalibo's head "walked without sense" (said in KiNgwana: *"kichwa yaké a na tembela wazi-wazi"*) and he didn't know where he was going. This was all bad. For this was one camp, it was Kolongo's.

Kolongo had been dead some three years, and the names of the dead are rarely mentioned. The whole camp fell silent, and very quietly Moké recounted the history of the friendship between Kolongo and Njobo, and how they used to hunt together and kill lots of elephant and catch lots of antelope and how they always had full stomachs. "Kolongo never allowed noise, Njobo never allowed noise. Now there is nothing but noise, and we are hungry. Kolongo is dead, but that person there, Ekianga [Kolongo's younger brother] that person is now Kolongo. Njobo is not here, but that person and that person [Manyalibo and Masisi were indicated but not named] are Njobo. Let us all go our own ways and get lots of honey and sing honey songs and dance honey dances, then come back to one camp as before and hunt again."

The immediate bickering was stopped, and everyone agreed loudly that Moké was indeed right. But as it turned out Manyalibo made Moké's speech an excuse for siding with Ekianga in a hunting-honey camp, and a deep rift opened up between the hitherto inseparable cousins, Manyalibo and Masisi. Moké threw his lot in with Ekianga, in an effort to dissuade them from any grosser sacrilege, with exhortations to Masisi to make a good camp and gather lots of honey. Ekianga's eldest sister, her daughter, and Njobo's wife and some of his nephews and nieces joined Masisi, as did a young married nephew of Cephu, Kelemoké. Others joined Tungana, who prudently moved close to the village, where he could, by virtue of his age, claim gifts of food from all the sections and from his village *kpara*.

5. During the honey season, with the band divided into four sections, Masisi and Manyalibo were again at odds. Manyalibo, with Ekianga and Moké and old Tungana, among others, formed a powerful section at the far northern extreme of the territory, and offended Masisi's much smaller section by continuing to hunt. Masisi argued

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

time. They sleep together every night. Why do they not make up their minds and get married? Then Madyadya can have Appiamomba's sister for wife and there will be no more noise."

The next day the issue was taken up by the elders, who gathered together and called on Appiamomba and Mebapepé to say what they wanted. The question of relationship was quickly dismissed by Tungana saying that nobody knew whether Kayo and Ebundu were brothers or not; who was alive to know, so what did it matter? It was "completely far away." The only question remaining was one of intent, and all the elders agreed that the children had been troubling their parents and spoiling the hunt with their noise, and that they must make up their minds and either get married or stop playing around. Appiamomba seemed unsure and said he would ask Mebapepé in his own time. Mebapepé, under pressure, denied that she loved Appiamomba and said she did not want to marry him at all, or indeed have anything else to do with him. She burst into tears and ran to a friend's house.

This relieved the tension somewhat, but Tungana brought up the fact that there were far too many young people around who should be married, and he started naming them. Each in turn began to state his case, but various jealousies quickly came to the surface, and fighting broke out among the youths and their girl friends. Tungana and Moké shrugged their shoulders and retired to their huts, sitting outside and watching with interest. The parents mostly left the scene completely, Manyalibo loudly complaining that the noise would kill him completely. Ekianga remained and tried to restore order, but quickly became involved himself. He shouted for Kengé to get a stick and beat some of the youths away. Kengé shouted back, "Later," and ran to join the other uninvolved youths on a hillock, to get a better view.

By evening the fight had ended, and everyone was too exhausted to renew any discussion. Moké and Tungana suggested it might be good to break camp and go and visit the village for a few days. Kengé said he thought this was an excellent idea, for then all the girls could sleep with the village men and that would keep them quiet for a time. He diverted the conversation to a discussion of village sex techniques, and the camp quickly regained its good humor. The next day half the band left for the village, the rest going further off into the forest. Without exception, the five young couples in question were divided by this move, though nobody referred to the fact.

17. A recently married Mbuti girl, while in the village, slept with a

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

for there are other mechanisms to deal with the situations with which witchcraft, in village life, deals. As indicated, it may play a minor and supplementary role in the dispersal of blame in a dispute, but completely without involving any belief in the actual presence of witchcraft substance. It is highly significant that the concept of supernatural power in this form is utterly foreign to the Mbuti, and this places them in a somewhat disadvantageous position when brought face to face with the village notion of sorcery, and the practice of cursing.

SORCERY

While the Mbuti make limited use of village concepts of magic and witchcraft for their own practical ends, they make no such use of sorcery, having for it a complete abhorrence. The villagers themselves never admit to being sorcerers, for sorcery is by definition antisocial and evil, but they may use the threat of sorcery (pp. 60–62) and claim to have employed a sorcerer against the Mbuti. More likely still, they may seek the aid of the local doctor to effect a curse against the Mbuti for nonfulfillment of their side of a bargain.

From the village point of view there is a world of difference between a sorcerer's curse and a doctor's curse, but from the Mbuti point of view they are one and the same thing. The theoretical and institutional aspects of magic and witchcraft the Mbuti can appreciate and turn to their advantage. Confronted with sorcery they have no recourse but flight. Flight in itself is significant, for it is flight away from the village into the forest or, if already in the forest, then it is flight further into the forest. On the whole it is a firm belief that sorcery is ineffective outside the village, but sometimes circumstances (such as poison) combine to indicate otherwise, and then it becomes a question of proximity to the village. Once again, however, as with magic, we find the Mbuti regarding the forest as a place of refuge, a place where they are sure of protection.

Against witchcraft, all the Mbuti have to do is to acknowledge being witches and go through the necessary purifications; the belief never touches them. Against sorcery, apart from flight, they have no means of defense for there is no counterpart in their experience. Sorcery implies the use of supernatural powers to effect harm on someone. Two concepts are involved that are foreign to the Mbuti: one is that a supernatural power can be used for anything but the social good, and the second is that anyone could wish, anonymously as it

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa PO1

were, harm upon another. Masisi put it as well as it could be put when discussing Aberi's death (pp. 61–62), allegedly due to an Ngwana's use of sorcery. The circumstances were such—the three healthy "accused" all dying within such a short space of time following the curse—that there was a general discussion of village sorcery. There was disagreement of opinion as to whether or not it involved supernatural power, as claimed by the villagers. Most Mbuti stated bluntly that this was impossible, for such power was necessarily good. They held that the deaths had all been caused by poison. Others were not so sure. But the crux of the discussion was that whether caused by supernatural power or by poison, the action was not that of a man. Masisi said, "If you have a quarrel with a man you hit him with a wooden club, and he sees who hit him. You do not go and hide yourself and kill him with your thoughts."

While the Mbuti seek to remove themselves as far as possible from sorcery, feeling as though they were contaminated by it, their attitude to other associated supernatural beliefs of the villagers is quite different, being determined by different experience. A villager who has cursed one man may claim that the sickness of that man's distant cousin is a result of his curse, or that the falling of a tree that nearly killed the man's child was equally a result of the curse. These are not allegations that can be proved or disproved, and the Mbuti consequently have a somewhat ambivalent attitude toward sorcery; their disbelief is tinged, at least, by a reluctant suspicion.

However, the villagers also believe that there exist various malevolent spirits, sometimes spirits of sorcerers, and that these spirits have to be avoided, for there is no sure way of placating or propitiating them. Their abode is the forest, which to the villagers is the abode of all evil. Their powers are phenomenal and almost insuperable, avoidance being the only sure safeguard, ritual propitiation being enough to prevent the spirits from entering the village. Thus the forest is a place to be avoided on account of the spirits.

The Mbuti see two things very clearly. One is that such spirits simply do not exist in their forest, and the other is that this particular village belief deserves to be maintained for as long as it is effective in keeping villagers out of the forest. Consequently the Mbuti, who are great storytellers at all times, delight in stories—among themselves and in front of villagers—that enumerate the powers and horrors of such evil forest spirits. Sometimes the stories are of village origin, embellished by Mbuti imagination; sometimes they are pure

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

539 186 825 245 The elephants came. They began to kill all the bananas. They began to completely kill the plantation. The youths ran to the old man and said, "Oh, Father, the elephants have come again and are killing our plantation." [The old man said], "Good, I shall go and chat with them. All of you stay here, completely quiet."

The old man went to the plantation. He cried and cried. He threw himself on the ground. The elephants looked at him and said, "What thing is this? The youths have not come to chase us away, only an old Mbuti and he just cries. It is good, we shall eat quietly."

They ate many bananas, and the youths remained completely quiet in the camp. The old man cried greatly, "Oh, my children, all are dead. Oh, my children, where are they?"

The elephants heard, and said to the old man, "Why are you crying like that? And where are the youths? We shall eat up all the plantation." The old man replied, "Eat, eat it all. My children are all dead." And he continued crying.

539 186 825 245 776 The elephants said, "But you have many children. How did they die?" The old man said, "It was an evil spirit, very evil indeed. He walked with two spears.[2] He was very fat, like you. Every day I sent someone to cut bananas and the evil spirit ate him. Now he has eaten all my children. He said it was his plantation and that he would kill everyone who came here. Oh, my children have all died emptily. Why did the evil spirit not bother some other plantation, why did he curse mine?" He cried greatly and he left.

The elephants said, "Ha! If a spirit that bad has cursed this plantation, we should go somewhere else. Let us go quickly, before he kills us!"

Because elephants are like people of the village, and they are afraid of evil spirits. But they are afraid emptily. They went far. The old man called all his children and said, "Now the elephants will not come back. They think this is a place full of bad spirits. Thus we shall remain quiet. It is our plantation. Nobody else will bother us."

539 186 829 Although the scene is the plantation, thus asserting their claim to the plantations of the villagers, the Mbuti plainly are really referring

765 [2] Evidently a feature that to the Mbuti conveys a real fear of or respect for the supernatural, for in the morning rampages of the *molimo*, in its role as judge and when seeking Mbuti who are committing the crime of sleeping during the singing, the hunter acting the part carries a spear under each arm. See also in the second legend cited, where a spirit wanders through the night with two firebrands, which is the way in which the entrance of the *molimo* trumpet into the camp is often marked.

2: Turnbull E>6 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

to their forest sanctuary, and describing their tactics for keeping it free of bothersome, elephant-like villagers. Hunting is not mentioned; the two spears (and in the next legend the two firebrands) are uniquely related to the *molimo*, which, as is seen in the next chapter, offers major roles to the elders and the youths; precise age levels are specified in this legend. Thus the defense of the forest is considered as part of the role of the *molimo*. There is significantly no talk of a resort to magic or witchcraft or sorcery, and the mention of the evil spirits is accompanied by no belief in them.

In the second legend, however, the first part is a very straight description of exactly how an Mbuti might cheat a villager simply by concealing a portion of his honey, whereas the second part describes how the Mbuti is himself cheated. The second part alone could be taken as another way in which Mbuti explain to villagers why they have no meat or honey for them (see a third legend at the end of this chapter for such an example), but in this juxtaposition seems to indicate a certain belief that the Mbuti themselves might be cheated in this way.

LEGEND OF DOUBLE TRICKERY

I went to the forest to collect honey. I went, I went, I went. I went very far, beyond the big river [an indication of trespass, perhaps, making it a situation displeasing to the forest; hence the ultimate defeat of the Mbuti?]. I heard the sound of bees. Way up high I saw the place of the honey. I said, "Ha! Nobody has enclosed this tree with a vine; it is my tree, it is my honey."

I sharpened my ax, very sharp indeed. I cut a vine, I fanned up my fire and put the fire [smoking embers] in my basket. I began to climb. I climbed, I climbed, I climbed. The honey was very high up, it was real honey, not *apuma* [a special fermented honey]. I reached it. I fastened the vine and I sat. I put the fire [in a leaf cone] into the hole and I blew. Much smoke came and the bees ran away. I chopped, I chopped, I chopped. While I was cutting I heard someone walking below. "Ah! Who is walking below me? It is my master [*kpara*]. He heard me cutting [the adverse aspect of noise] and followed me."

I began to sing. I sang loudly. He called to me, but I pretended that I did not hear him. I sang and I chopped. I sang, "Ah! I am chopping out honey to give to my *kpara!*" And slowly I chopped out the honey. I got a lot of it. But I only put part of it in my basket. The

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and because she was my grandmother I could not strike her or stop her, and she ran off down the trail.

"As she was running she changed into a spirit again so that she could run faster, and as soon as my grandmother was a spirit once more I could fight, so I fought and fought, and the spirit nearly killed me, and he went off in the manner of spirits and left me with nothing, not even my basket.

"When I came to the village I was crying because I had nothing to offer my master, and when my master asked me what was wrong I told him this story. He was terribly sorry because he knew what dreadful lives we Mbuti lead, surrounded by all these bad spirits. He said if it was not for the spirits he would come into the forest and hunt himself, but everyone knows how dangerous the spirits are to villagers. Then I asked him if I could have some rice, as I had lost all my own food as well as his. He said, 'Of course, my poor Mbuti. You have tried to help your master, and you can't help it if you are just an Mbuti and have to live among all those dreadful spirits.'

"So he gave me the rice and plantains and I came away happy. How kind the villagers are to their 'poor Mbuti'!"

Such stories are legion, being told by the Mbuti almost every time they are questioned by the villagers as to why they have brought no meat. They are equally, if not even more frequently, told, however, in the forest hunting camps, and are part of the constant effort of the Mbuti to affirm at all times the distinction between the two worlds, the forest and the village. Magic, witchcraft, sorcery and the belief in forest spirits are all turned to the same effect, among others, and combine to keep the worlds apart not only in theory but also in practice.

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"to call the bees" (in the sense of attracting their attention, not of summoning them). The belief is that these whistles will halt the game or the bees, so that they may be found more easily.

All such whistling, whether by lip or by *piki*, is done by men. Women rarely whistle, though they may do so to the same end as the men. If they do, it is considered all the more *mota*.

It could easily be explained by the Mbuti that the sound itself paralyzes the animals or the bees, and has this direct effect (and could so be more properly called magical), but they deny this strongly and say that the forest hears the *piki* and leads them to the bees or the game (or alternatively that the forest holds the bees and the game still for its children to find them).

In ordinary conversation, sounds are widely used to convey different ideas, a snap of the fingers indicating that the action being described was done suddenly, a high-pitched, drawn-out exhalation indicating it was done slowly. Wherever possible, the narrative is illustrated by imitations of the sound of the action described. Vowel sounds, unformed into words, are used in conversation similarly to heighten ideas, convey added emotion, to supply an element that would otherwise be missing and which is plainly of great importance to the Mbuti. For the forest is nearly always full of sound, and the Mbuti refer to this constant background by saying "the forest is talking" (*ndura a lufu*). The Mbuti listen, and interpret, and make use of what they hear. If the forest stops "talking," then it is a sign that something is very wrong and alerts the Mbuti to imminent danger.

It is not surprising, then, that sound so carefully controlled as song should be considered as *mota nengo, mota ngbekbekbei*, the "strongest" possible kind of sound, activated by the breath that is so mysteriously connected with *pepo*. Song is used to communicate with the forest, and it is significant that the emphasis is on the actual sound, not on the words. Frequently the mere vowel sounds are used, sometimes imitative of animals, birds or bees but more often simply to suit the melodic line of the song. When words are used they are most often trivial, and may be spontaneous and highly sketchy references to one or another event of the day. That the song is directed at the forest, and intended to awaken the forest, is most clearly seen in the *molimo* festivals, which are the Mbuti reaction to crisis. The *molimo* is named for the festival, for the society that performs the festival, and for the central and solitary piece of paraphernalia, the trumpet that echoes the song of the Mbuti on into the depths of the forest.

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601 602 Another important aspect of the terminology is that it does not differentiate between cognates and affines, and is used to include all, without any distinction of this kind. In an Mbuti hunting band, a hunter may well have a uterine brother hunting to one side of him and his uterine sister's husband to the other side. He depends on each equally for both success and for safety, and any preferential behavior, such as might be signified in another form of terminology, must be avoided. To distinguish between cognates and affines in the daily hunting and camp life of the Mbuti, as to distinguish between matrikin and patrikin, or even between kith and kin, on any grounds except age and locality, is not only needless, it is destructive of the sense of unity that is vital to the close cooperative nature of Mbuti economic and political life.

601 602 571 621 Mbuti personal terminology, as in the more conventional kinship systems, equally reflects interpersonal bonds, then, but they clearly cut across all strictly kinship considerations. This can to some extent be construed as a denial of kinship ties, and it certainly implies that such ties do not form the basis of social organization in the band. But it is better expressed as a lack of concern for kinship that, whatever its origins, is particularly well suited to one of the band's major objectives, the preservation of the greatest possible political distance between itself and the village. It will be readily seen that whereas lineage considerations would divide the Mbuti, the generational system, if considered vertically, effects the widest possible classificatory unity from which the villagers are absolutely excluded. But for the moment to keep to the forest context, the same unity is in perfect consonance with the nonlineal nature of the band, the unity of which any lineal system would destroy. Here we have to refer to one other usage of the same personal terminology; namely, when the Mbuti refer to themselves as *bamiki ba ndura*, the children of the forest. This, together with their habitual reference to the forest as mother and father, extends the nuclear-family model to incorporate the larger

601 152 778 *père, père des pères; ou bien on se sert de termes qui remontent à certaines représentations mythiques, et dont le nombre est très élevé.*" ("Names attributed to the Godhead fall into two categories. Either one simply invokes the name *afa*, *bapapa* or *odu* . . . father, grandfather, or father of fathers . . . or else one uses terms that derive from mythological beings, of which there are a very great number.")

This indicates the same filial attitude to the forest that I found among the net-hunters. Among the archers, I myself most frequently heard *afa*, used with the same degree of affection as *ema* or *eba*. However, among the archers I equally often heard the forest (God) addressed as *ema* (mother), rarely heard *bapapa*, and never *odu*. My participation in the religious life of archer bands, however, was limited.

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group—be it the sub-band, the band, or even the total Mbuti population—as a politico-economic unity. The situation is somewhat analogous to the more common lineal patterns, where a people see their ultimate unity in descent from a common ancestor; the Mbuti find their unity in their common dependence upon the forest.

Taking care not to become involved in issues of causality, we can now see the structural implications of this lack of concern with actual kinship, for it alone makes possible not only the nonlineal nature of the band but the fluidity of its composition. But here we have to introduce another factor, the absence of which would lead to the rapid disintegration of the corporate nature of the band. In the absence of the continuity provided by any kinship system, particularly under the condition of flux we have described for this Mbuti band, continuity and corporateness are seen in terms of territory. We have pointed out that the band can be defined only in terms of territory, the individuals forming that band changing from month to month; perhaps even this is implied in the personal terminology which, as seen, differentiates the sexes only at the parental level in terms of the family hearth—the most basic territorial unit of all.

The system also indicates a lack of concern with problems of superordination and subordination. Even problems are resolved in the forest context by the use of relative age. Their resolution is only truly difficult in one vital context, once again the forest-village relationship. It is consistent with the essentially egalitarian nature of Mbuti social behavior, and it successfully avoids lending any support to the assumption of individual authority on grounds of lineal seniority, which authority would again destroy the essential cooperative unity of the band.

The non-lineal nature of the band itself calls for some explanation, and now we are in a better position to understand it, for we can see clear structural elements that are only obscured when seeking to find principles of band organization in terms of kinship. The terminological system reflects as neatly as could any diagram the essential principle of age. This is the one factor it emphasizes above all others, except the common Mbuti unity as *bamiki ba ndura* (children of the forest). We have seen throughout our description of Mbuti forest life how activity and responsibility are regulated according to age level, and the terminology clearly indicates where one's loyalties lie. Such loyalties are entirely incompatible in so small a cooperative society with

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in their mouths, or hold them in their hands. Burning coals are put in the mouth of the trumpet. When the trumpet enters the camp at night it is preceded by a youth carrying burning embers which he waves in the air and touches to the ground to leave a trail of glowing cinders, the "footsteps" of the *molimo*. And of course the *molimo* fire is the object of attention of the old lady and her attendant. The final extinction of the fire is the signal for the return of the *molimo* to the forest, and the end of the festival.

The festival emphasizes and reaffirms everything of importance in the life of the Mbuti. And perhaps one of the most important things it emphasizes is accompanied by the least ritual—the closing of the path leading to the village. To the same end, but more dramatic, is the way in which a *molimo* festival will come to a complete halt if a villager comes to the camp. For the *molimo* not only reaffirms the unity of the band; it reaffirms the unity of the Mbuti in opposition to the village. It is essentially a "matter of the forest," and the entire system that it upholds operates only in relation to the forest.

In the same way that a solitary villager can transform a forest camp into a village camp, just by his presence, so is any contact between the two worlds, except one of opposition, impossible. The system that the *molimo* recreates in the forest, the very life of the Mbuti that in itself is a ritual of pleasing the forest, cannot persist in the village. The ritual closing of the path is clearly symbolic of the Mbuti concern to keep the village out of the forest, to keep the two worlds apart. When they, as individuals or as a band, leave the forest and visit the village, they do precisely that—they leave the forest. It is this opposition, which is so sharply defined in the *molimo*, that is the basis of the Mbuti relationship with the villagers.

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group, as often happens. But Kenge was his son by another wife, from a totally unrelated group. By Njobo's sister his father had one daughter, and she was Kenge's only real blood relative in the whole group. This was important, as it enabled him to flirt with almost any of the other girls, with the added spice of its being thought incestuous, because they belonged to his group even though they were totally unrelated.

Since I had been with them before, the group had changed slightly, with a few additions and subtractions. At their suggestion I decided to build my own house in their village camp. It looked as if we were in for a long spell in the village. The camp was in a strategic position between the village of the workers of the motel and Station de Chasse and that of Camp Putnam, near the stores and the beer house, and—even more important—near all the surrounding plantations. Progressive old Tungana said that it was a good site because tourists could drive close by and take their photographs and give them money. Manyalibo, in his dry way, said the only good thing about it was that it was close to the plantations so he didn't have to go far to steal his food. The youngsters liked it because it was near the houses of Negro villagers, where they could go begging for cigarettes, old clothes, and palm wine.

It looked, in fact, as if these Pygmies had become as professional as those that line the roadside at Beni, on the edge of the forest, selling their services to tourists, letting themselves be photographed doing things they would never do in the forest, wearing clothes they wouldn't wear except in a village, even selling the tourist weapons used only by Negroes. But Moke reassured me. His face wrinkled up in smiles, and in his soft, toothless voice he told me not to worry, that we would all be back in the forest long before my house was finished. "That is where we belong," he said, "and we shall return soon. We cannot refuse the forest." He was right, but it was in

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atmosphere was so tense I wondered if there was at last going to be a real accusation of witchcraft, though from what I had seen the Pygmies had no great belief in such things. But Moke's first words put me at ease. Choking back a little sob, he managed to say in a matter-of-fact way, "She died well."

There was a general nodding of heads. Manyalibo, who was a nephew of Balekimito's, said in his gruff way that everyone should be happy that she had lived so long, happy that she had died so well, and that all this wailing should stop at once. He added that the death was a "big thing," and that it was a "matter for the forest." There was a silence, and, looking around to make sure that there were no women about, Manyalibo announced, "I shall call out my molimo, and we will feast not for a week but for a month, or two months, or even three; we shall feast the molimo and make the forest happy."

Njobo, the great elephant hunter, had the final say. He stirred the fire idly with a stick, sending showers of sparks and ashes up into the warm air. "We have been in the village too long," he said. "We should have gone back to the forest before; that is where we belong. Now we must go back, far away from the village and from the people of the village. It is a bad place."

He said that a few would stay behind to finish the work on my house, but that the rest of us should gather together all the food we could and be ready to move within a couple of days. The next day we would put Balekimito in the ground, and maybe the day after that we would leave.

At this everyone cheered up visibly and began criticizing the women and children who were still pouring in and out of Ekianga's house, beating themselves and crying. Masisi said crossly that they would never behave this way if they were in the forest, and as he stalked he raised his voice until he worked himself into a real temper. He stalked out of the veranda and down to the far end of the little

THE CRIME OF CEPHU

he caught the first of the animals fleeing from the beaters, but he had not been able to retreat before he was discovered.

I had never heard of this happening before, and it was obviously a serious offense. In a small and tightly knit hunting band, survival can be achieved only by the closest co-operation and by an elaborate system of reciprocal obligations which insures that everyone has some share in the day's catch. Some days one gets more than others, but nobody ever goes without. There is, as often as not, a great deal of squabbling over the division of the game, but that is expected, and nobody tries to take what is not his due.

Cephu tried very weakly to say that he had lost touch with the others and was still waiting when he heard the beating begin. It was only then that he had set up his net, where he was. Knowing that nobody believed him, he added that in any case he felt he deserved a better place in the line of nets. After all, was he not an important man, a chief, in fact, of his own band? Manyalibo tugged at Ekianga to sit down, and sitting down himself he said there was obviously no use prolonging the discussion. Cephu was a big chief, and a chief was a villager, for the BaMbuti never have chiefs. And Cephu had his own band, of which he was chief, so let him go with it and hunt elsewhere and be a chief elsewhere. Manyalibo ended a very eloquent speech with *"Pisa me taba"* ("Pass me the tobacco").

Cephu knew he was defeated and humiliated. Alone, his band of four or five families was too small to make an efficient hunting unit. He apologized profusely, reiterated that he really did not know he had set up his net in front of the others, and said that in any case he would hand over all the meat. This settled the matter, and accompanied by most of the group he returned to his little camp and brusquely ordered his wife to hand over the spoils. She had little chance to refuse, as hands were already reaching into her basket and under the leaves of the roof where she had hidden some liver in anticipation of just such a contingency. Even her cooking pot was

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emptied. Then each of the other huts was searched and all the meat taken. Cephu's family protested loudly and Cephu tried hard to cry, but this time it was forced and everyone laughed at him. He clutched his stomach and said he would die; die because he was hungry and his brothers had taken away all his food; die because he was not respected.

The kumamolimo was festive once again, and the camp seemed restored to good spirits. An hour later, when it was dark and fires were flickering outside every hut, there was a great blaze at the central hearth and the men talked about the morrow's hunt. From Cephu's camp came the sound of the old man, still trying hard to cry, moaning about his unfortunate situation, making noises that were meant to indicate hunger. From our own camp came the jeers of women, ridiculing him and imitating his moans.

When Masisi had finished his meal he took a pot full of meat with mushroom sauce, cooked by his wife, and quietly slipped away into the shadows in the direction of his unhappy kinsman. The moaning stopped, and when the evening molimo singing was at its height I saw Cephu in our midst. Like most of us he was sitting on the ground, in the manner of an animal. But he was singing, and that meant that he was just as much a BaMbuti as anyone else.

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The women can throw in their opinions, particularly if they know that the area the men have selected is barren of vegetable foods. But the men usually know this anyway.

If the question is one of marriage, and a father announces that he does not like the girl his son has chosen, his son can call on all his friends to help him. If he is strong and holds out, the whole group will be assembled to discuss the case. If they agree with the father, then either the boy has to give up his talk of matrimony or else make up his mind to marry the girl anyway. In the latter case he would probably go and live with her hunting group. But it is seldom that things come to such a pass.

In fact, Pygmies dislike and avoid personal authority, though they are by no means devoid of a sense of responsibility. It is rather that they think of responsibility as communal. If you ask a father, or a husband, why he allows his son to flirt with a married girl, or his wife to flirt with other men, he will answer, "It is not my affair," and he is right. It is *their* affair, and the affair of the other men and women, and of their brothers and sisters. He will try to settle it himself, either by argument or by a good beating, but if this fails he brings everyone else into the dispute so that he is absolved of personal responsibility.

If you ask a Pygmy why his people have no chiefs, no lawgivers, no councils, or no leaders, he will answer with misleading simplicity, "Because we are the people of the forest." The forest, the great provider, is the one standard by which all deeds and thoughts are judged; it is the chief, the lawgiver, the leader, and the final arbitrator.

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so far out into the forest. Everybody was unhappy, and we resumed our journey at a slower pace.

We were in an area where there were a number of streams, tributaries to three large rivers which had their source not far to the north-east, spreading out in different directions. There was a lot of heavy undergrowth and we had to follow trails made by antelope. Even the Pygmies had to bend almost double. Hari was leading, and Kenge shouted at him from behind that there was a much better and quicker way. Hari laughed at his cousin and said, jokingly, that Kenge was a white man's Pygmy, how could he know anything about the forest? Kenge made some uncomplimentary retort, and motioned for me to follow him. We ducked off to one side, and for a while the going was worse than ever. Very quickly the sounds of the other two were lost, and I had momentary doubts, for every now and again Kenge stopped to listen, peering this direction and that. After another couple of hours Kenge pointed ahead and I heard a new sound, a distant waterfall. "*Apa nde Kaweki,*" he said; "Kaweki's camp." Usually he would have said a good deal more, but I was glad to see that the long day's trek had left even Kenge breathless.

We came to the narrow but swift River Kare, and waded through it with caution. Kenge said it was a dangerous river, unexpectedly deep in places, and full of the small but vicious forest crocodile. It was here that Kolongo, Ekianga's older brother, had died two years ago. The waters swirled angrily; they were muddy and full of debris, the banks were slippery, and it was plain there must have been a heavy rainfall recently. On the far side the ground rose sharply before dipping down to the valley where the Itoro River flowed with a grandeur only found with forest rivers. The undergrowth disappeared, and once again we were in one of those sylvan glades where every leaf seemed to tremble a welcome. It was warm and friendly, and as we began to descend the rumble of the waterfall swelled into a roar.

Kenge made his way to the edge of the Itoro, just below the falls;

Sometimes Pygmies talked about the system of bride-wealth used by the villagers, and sometimes they wished that they could use the same system. But for the villager the woman is a laborer in the fields who can cultivate crops that can be sold for cash. From the village groom's point of view it is important to make a satisfactory payment as it not only enhances his prestige but also gives him the assurance that his in-laws will be on his side, not wanting to have to return so much wealth should their daughter change her mind. For the Pygmies this is unworkable. To them a woman is more than a mere producer of wealth; she is an essential partner in the economy. Without a wife a man can not hunt; he has no hearth; he has nobody to build his house, gather fruits and vegetables and cook for him. So a group that loses a woman looks for a woman in return. The Pygmies extend the term "brother" or "sister" so that it can be applied to almost anyone of the same age group, however distantly related, and this means it is seldom impossible to find someone to exchange, and someone who is willing. But sometimes a little coercion is needed. So it was with my friend Kenge.

Kenge often laughed at the villagers, and at the way they sponsor Pygmy weddings, even paying bride-wealth to each other—the "owner" of the groom to the "owner" of the bride. He found it particularly funny when such a marriage broke up, because the two Pygmies considered it a mere flirtation, and the villagers then had to fight over the necessary restitution of wealth. But he wished he had been able to use the system to get himself a wife.

He was deeply in love with a particularly attractive young girl named Maliamo and badly wanted to marry her. He had three sisters, but one was married to Masimongo, one was still too young, and the third was unwilling. Yambabo, the unwilling one, was a very determined girl, as stubborn as Kenge himself. She was quite fond of Maliamo's brother, a slim, light-skinned youth called Taphu. But nothing in the world would make her admit it once she saw that Kenge wanted to use her in order to get Maliamo.

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to go into the forest to visit some of his Pygmies and had come to pay our respects first. He said brusquely that he did not know where any Pygmies were to be found. Then he looked at Kenge and asked him if it was usual for a Pygmy to sit beside a white man.

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Kenge countered by asking if it was usual for a big chief to keep a white man waiting while he slept, and to leave him sitting on a log without so much as a glass of water to drink or to wash with. At that the other villagers began joining in, and feeling more than uncomfortable at being made the center of a fight between them and Kenge, I told Lupao that we were very tired, and asked if it would be all right for us to stay the night in his village. Lupao, who by then was engrossed with a steaming bowl of chicken soup, said he supposed so, and indicated with a nod of his head for his son to go and find us a place to sleep.

I made a few more attempts at polite conversation but did not get so much as a look in response. Everyone was silent, staring either at us or up at the smoky roof above us. It had been quite dark for some time, and after waiting to see if the son was going to do anything about sleeping quarters, I got up and said loudly to Kenge that I was going to sleep in the car and asked if he was going to do the same. He replied that he would sleep outside to guard me from the thieves and murderers that made up the entire population of the village. This was putting it a little more strongly than I had intended, and we had now given real cause for offense. As we left there was a stony silence. Lupao refused to look up and allow me to take my leave of him. I can hardly blame him, but the tradition of hospitality among most African villagers is so strong that one comes to accept it and to expect it, and the behavior of the BaLese was very unusual.

When Lupao saw that we were really leaving in such an unceremonious huff, he called his son, who had remained in the baraza all the time, and sent him running after us to tell us that a house would

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be ready soon. Kenge replied that the car was clean, which was a little too subtle for the young man. He returned half an hour later with some food, and this time Kenge was more direct. He lowered the window of the car enough to say, "We people of the forest don't eat excrement!" and then hurriedly wound it up. We passed an uneasy night, and in the first glimmer of morning, without as much as looking for a stream to wash in, we left. Nobody even came to watch us go.

We were so exhausted that we decided to call on the Catholic mission at Nduye and at least get cleaned up. We drove through the little village, and on the outskirts turned onto a steep stone track that wound up the hillside. It climbed erratically past a temporary church, near which rough-hewn stones were being assembled for the building of a more permanent structure, and onto a ledge just wide enough to hold the long, low mission house and a neat terrace in front, where the ground dropped away sharply.

The welcome we got there was very different. A huge, bearded figure in white robes came striding up the hill after us, shouting instructions in KiNgwana to cook another half dozen eggs. To us he said, "You are late for breakfast." And after a second look, "You need hot baths."

Father Longo would not hear of our going anywhere else and insisted that we stay for at least a week, a month if we liked. There was plenty of work we could do and we looked as though we needed to go to church. Then he asked me if we were Catholics. When I replied that I was a not very good Protestant and that Kenge was a practicing heathen, he roared with laughter and said that at least Kenge didn't know what a mistake he had made. His good humor put Kenge immediately at ease, and there was only a momentary flicker of doubt when Father Longo called for his Lese catechist to show Kenge where he could wash, eat and sleep. Shortly afterward I heard him in the distance, telling his new companions in his loudest

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impunity gives severe stomach disorder to the Pygmy, who is used to the fresh clean water of forest streams. Flies and mosquitoes carry germs unknown to him in his natural home. But above all, his entire code of behavior and thought is geared to his nomadic forest life: to bring him to a settled life in a village is to ask him overnight to abandon one way of life, a way he has lived for thousands of years, and adopt another. Where the Pygmies did make the attempt there was complete moral as well as physical disintegration. Not long ago a Belgian friend from the Congo told me that the day before he had left, on one small "model plantation" where the Pygmies were being liberated, twenty-nine had died in one day from sunstroke.

I spoke about the plan to many Pygmies, and when Kenge got back to Epulu he talked as much about it as about anything else that he had seen on his journey to the outside world. Old Moke summed up the attitude that I had found everywhere. "The forest is our home; when we leave the forest, or when the forest dies, we shall die. We are the people of the forest."

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361 camp to hear his stories. But none of his stories fascinated the Pyg-
361 mies as much as those of the model Pygmy villages we had passed
179 on our way home. He was made to repeat these accounts over and over again, giving every detail. While the younger men and women laughed until they could laugh no more at Kenge's description of the distribution of beans for planting, and how most of them ended up in the cooking pot, the older people were less amused. "But are they actually living in those villages?" they asked. And when Kenge answered that some of them were, the next question was "What if there is no game nearby?" Kenge could only tell them what the administrator had said: "You are welcome to hunt so long as you continue to look after the plantations." Everyone knew that to be impossible. Hunting is a full-time occupation, and it could lead a group away for months on end. It called for the co-operation of men, women and children. Who was to stay to look after the fields?

Other questions brought equally unsatisfactory answers, even so far as the younger people were concerned. There were no trees in the "model" villages—every last one had been cut down, exposing the huts to the full heat of the sun. The Pygmies were to be supplied with free seeds to plant, but they would be expected to produce a definite yield, and they knew that villagers who failed to come up to the mark were fined, and if they were unable to pay their fines they
[317] went to jail. Every village had been placed near a supply of fresh water, tested by the administrator himself (by looking at it—he was horrified when I drank some). But the Pygmies knew that however clean it might be to start with, it would soon be polluted; and in any case there was no guarantee that it would continue throughout the year.

361 Far from being "liberated" from the villagers, the Pygmies felt
• 829 that in these model plantations they would be in greater danger than
179 ever. In the forest they knew that they were safe, because the forest was theirs, but once out in the open they were subject to all the evil

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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influences of the villagers, particularly witchcraft. The theory was that they would be independent because they would no longer have to rely on the villagers for plantains, rice, peanuts, or other village foods. In point of fact the only thing for which the Pygmies might really be considered to depend on their neighbors was metal for their knife and spear blades. And this was the one thing the model plan for liberation did not teach them to produce or work for themselves.

It may have been coincidence, or it may have been the result of all this talk of Pygmy villages and of the way that elsewhere the forest was being cut down by modern machinery to build new roads, to open up new mines, or to cultivate more coffee, but within a few days what had been a happy-go-lucky camp became silent and depressed. The unhappy Pygmies argued that the more the forest was cut down for roads and mines and foreign plantations, the more would have to be cut down to make more plantations to feed all the laborers. It was not a happy outlook for them. Then, as always happened when they were upset, they began to sing one evening. They sang and sang, and even those who had been sleeping came out to join in.

During a pause between songs, while everyone was silent, we heard quite distinctly the long-drawn-out whistling cry that the Pygmies say comes from the chameleon. There was a shout of delight, and the singing immediately started again, but this time to a quite different tempo. The rhythm was given out by the sharp clapping of two short sticks which Amabosu had quickly cut from a nearby tree. They rang clear and true. The cry of the chameleon and the use of the *ngbengbe* sticks meant only one thing—there was honey nearby. Within a few days there was not a Pygmy left in the village.

Of all the many foods in the forest, honey attracts the Pygmies the most strongly. At all times of the year game is to be caught, different kinds of mushrooms and fruits and nuts and berries are to be